

Congressman Sestak visited the Havertown Senior Center this afternoon to discuss his most recent work in Washington and at home to enhance health, economic and community security for seniors, who represent more than 15 percent of the population in the seventh district. The Congressman addressed questions and concerns from residents on variety of topics, including Medicare and other less prominent but equally important issues such as elder abuse. —

“I truly value the time that I am able to spend with our district’s seniors, especially those who are active participants in community life like the residents of the Havertown Senior Center,” said the Congressman. “My District Office has closed more than 1,000 cases relating to senior issues, and I have worked hard in the capital to ensure that our Congress protects and promotes the interest of our nation’s seniors.”

The Havertown Senior Center offer services during the week to adults 55 and over which range from health and wellness classes to recreation and socialization activities. Most notably, the Center runs the “Ask-A-Nurse” program, which provides seniors with access to private consultations with a registered nurse, an AARP Drivers course, and computer classes. Additionally, the Center offers resource material for housing and legal issues and provides complimentary consultation to seniors during tax season.

At the Center, the Congressman highlighted his efforts to improve healthcare, one of the most pressing issues for seniors today. The Congressman noted his co-sponsorship of the Home Health Care Access Protection Act, which would prohibit the implementation of an 11.75 percent payment cut for Medicare home health services and the Medicaid Safety Net Act, which would raise payments to hospitals and nursing homes that service Medicaid patients. Additionally, the Congressman mentioned his vote in favor of the “CHAMP” Act, which would eliminate co-payments and deductibles for preventative services and initial preventative exams as well as provide free mammograms and screening tests for glaucoma and prostate cancer, among others.

Most recently, Congressman Sestak voted in favor of and the House overrode the president’s veto to pass the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008. The bill offers greater assistance to beneficiaries most in need and ensures that all Medicare recipients receive quality care. Specifically, the legislation includes approximately \$4.5 billion to directly assist patients, particularly in the areas of preventative care and mental health. The act also addresses the needs of physicians and health care providers, medical equipment providers, and pharmacies so that they may increase the quality and affordability of services.

“Provisions like the Medicare bill allocate funds that will directly aid Medicare patients, necessarily strengthening health systems in our nation,” said the Congressman. “Additionally, the Act provides an incentive for doctors to treat Medicare patients by increasing payments by 1.1 percent for Medicare physicians in 2009. These Medicare doctors would otherwise have been scheduled to receive a 10.6 percent pay cut.”

The Congressman also mentioned his testimony before the Judiciary Committee on behalf of the Elder Abuse Victims Act, which was the first House hearing on elder abuse in 17 years. The Act is aimed to protect America’s seniors from physical, mental and financial abuse by addressing and correcting the failures in state elder abuse policies, establishing a Center for the Prosecution of Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation, and funding Elder Abuse Victims’ Advocacy Grants.

To support seniors who play an active role in their community, the Congressman drafted and the House passed the Silver Scholarship Program, which provides a \$1,000 continuing education award to citizens over age 55 who commit to volunteering for more than 600 hours per year.

In continuing his effort to aid seniors in our area, the Congressman will host a Senior Summit and Service Fair on Wednesday, August 13. The event will feature a service fair with various service organizations and case workers from federal, state, and county agencies to address individual questions and concerns. Prior to the fair, the Congressman will be joined by federal, state, and county officials for a discussion and question and answer session to help address concerns facing seniors and their families and caregivers.

The Congressman has supported a number of other pieces of legislation of specific importance to seniors:

- The Congressman co-sponsored the Alzheimer’s Treatment and Caregiver Support Act, which offers grants to improve treatment services and expand training and support for families and caregivers of the 4.5 million Americans afflicted with the disease.

- The Medicare Prescription Drug Negotiation Act, which he helped to pass in the House as a cosponsor, allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate lower drug prices for seniors.
- The Congressman is a co-sponsor of the Community Choice Act of 2007, which would allow those eligible for Medicaid-funded assisted living to live at home rather than moving to long-term care facilities.
- He has supported legislation that saves a vital housing program for seniors that enables them to remain financially independent without selling their homes.
- The Congressman introduced the Small Business Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act, which would enhance critical programs like the Service Corps for Retired Executives (SCORE), which provides entrepreneurs with free counseling assistance by former executives.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.